

Opening Statement

Congresswoman Diane E. Watson

“Status of the 2010 Census Operations”

***Information Policy, Census, and National Archives Subcommittee
Oversight and Government Reform Committee***

***Thursday, March 5, 2009
2154 Rayburn HOB
10:00 A.M.***

Thank you Mr. Chairman for holding today’s hearing on the progress of preparations for the upcoming 2010 Census. I sincerely hope that these proceedings provide us with a clear assessment of the complications facing the Census Bureau, and guidance on the actions needed to guarantee the 2010 Census provides an accurate and comprehensive count of the population of the United States.

The practice of conducting a thorough census every 10 years ensures that Americans have proper representation in state and federal government.

With the continuous evolution of the global economic crisis and the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act last month, the need for the 2010 Census to be as thorough and accurate as possible has grown even greater.

By investing in our transportation, educational, and environmental infrastructure we empower communities to boldly confront their economic challenges, but without precise population data we will not be able to direct federal funds in the most equitable and efficient manner.

GAO investigations of the Census Bureau's operations have revealed considerable problems with the contracting and implementation of information technology systems. The report also details the unreliability of the Census Bureau's life cycle cost estimate, and the absence of adequate testing of their address canvassing and non-response follow-up operations. These challenges put the 2010 Census at "high risk" of undercounting and insufficient representation.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the panelists for cooperating with the committee, and I am eager to hear their testimony on the Census Bureau's progress in

**addressing some of the challenges mentioned by the
GAO report.**

**Thank you, and I yield back the remainder of my
time.**